3
WRITING TECHNIQUE

Copyright 2009. Momentum Press.
All rights reserved. May not be reproduced in any form without permission from the publisher, except fair uses permitted under U.S. or applicable copyright law.

3.0

This is the way to avoid staring at a blank screen, or a blank page. You *can* get past the paralysis that parries pen from paper. After you have collected all of everything (Scope Summary, completed current outline, and researched reference material) required in section 2.5, take a short breather, then whack in and start to write. The writing is the actual end product of all your preliminary planning, research, and construction. It should be as nearly perfect as your professional pride demands.

3.1 OPTIMUM ENVIRONMENT

To write best you need comfortable surroundings, an ambient atmosphere, and the fewest external distractions. Seldom does a writer enjoy the delight of absolutely perfect writing conditions. But you can manage to approach them via many of these suggestions.

3.1.1 WORKPLACE

Best is in a private office or room. Next is a cubicle. Most difficult is in an open office where you are vulnerable to everything going on around you. Try for isolation and emotional privacy; at least no interruptions.

3.1.2 QUIET

Outside noise, pop music, and the news infiltrate your concentration. If all else fails, try earplugs or cotton. Depending upon your disposition, modulated classical music may be relaxing. Diminish it if it makes you listen instead of just hearing it.

EBSCO Publishing : eBook Community College Collection (EBSCOhost) - printed on 3/19/2024 3:33 PM via AIKEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE
AN: 501153 ; Morris, M. D..; Professional Expression : To Organize, Write, and Manage for Technical Communication
Account: s8489886.main.ehost

3.1.3 CHAIR

Your chair should be posture supporting and comfortable, but not soporific.

3.1.4 LIGHTING

Lighting should be neither bright nor dim; either strains your eyes, may cause headaches, and will shorten your writing time.

3.1.5 IMPLEMENTS

Check if your computer is clear and in prime working order, or make sure you have a supply of sharpened pencils and full pens.

3.1.6 REFERENCE MATERIAL

All your reference material should be close by and readily accessible without your having to move far.

3.1.7 REFRESHMENT

Having a water bottle, or cup of tea or coffee handy for an occasional sip helps. Going after it is a time waster. Be careful to put the container where it will not be tipped and spilled on your papers.

3.1.8 TIMING IS PARAMOUNT

Good writing takes careful, in-depth time. Allow several hours to write a major effort, or at least two hours to do a lesser item. It should be solid time, not several spurts of a few minutes in your calendar interstices. A book or long report calls for protracted time. Write it by scheduling the same time slot every day, and staying with it. That time allotment must be uninterrupted to allow for your total concentration.

3.2 THE PLUNGE

This is the time of truth where you mix all the ingredients (sec. 3.1) into a solid product. You do not have to start at "1.0 In the beginning . . . " If you have compiled your outline by the numbers (sec. 2.4), and have your Scope Summary (sec. 2.1.43) as the target marker—your objective—you may and you can start anywhere and file it by the numbers. You begin where you wish, but you must write the entire section. Never a bit here and a bit there. Paragraph jumping serves to create your own disorganization.

Among your outlined sections there must be one that you know best, or like best, or with which you are most familiar. That is a good place to start because you can write that the easiest, and it will yield you one drafted chapter.

EBSCOhost - printed on 3/19/2024 3:33 PM via AIKEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE. All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

Now look at your outline section headings and set yourself an order of precedence. You may make it the next easiest, and the next, until all your easy or familiar sections are drafted, then tackle the more difficult ones. Or you may draft the toughest ones first; that done, write the easier ones going downhill.

Any of those routes should deal with all the interior sections in any order from 2.0 to your penultimate one. But do not write either the opening section, *1.0*, or your last section. When you have drafted all the interior sections, then write your summary closing section to keep your material flow from "falling out the bottom." After all other sections are drafted, *then* you may compose your opening section, *1.0*. By being familiar with the whole work, you may write a realistic introduction to a document in being. If you do not write it last, you may promise something in your opening section you might later omit or neglect in subsequent draft development.

3.3 WRITING

Whether you tap it out on your laptop, or write it with pen-in-hand on paper, the process is the same, and you waste no time wondering where to start.

3.3.1 FIRST DRAFT

Just as if you were telling it to your receiver over a cup of coffee, in plain words, write everything out. Get as much wordage as you can onto paper while it is coming to you. No interruptions, no stopping to check grammar, or spelling, or punctuation. Even if you put it all down in one continuous sentence, get it down without a timeout. It should flow easily because your outline (sec. 2.4) has been well constructed, and you head for the expected goal you set in your S. S. (sec. 2.1.4).

In the past, in the age of film and hand-adjusted cameras, I went bird watching with an avid photographer. Silently, we spotted a rare Blackburnian Warbler, perched in plain sight. While the man fiddled with his light meter, the nervous bird took off. Had he shot on sight on universal focus, later he could have doctored his film in the darkroom. But he had nothing. Commit all your guided thoughts to paper first; later you can adjust, shift, and refine a draft in being.

3.3.2 SECOND DRAFT

Now you have an overstuffed rough, rough draft unchecked for solecisms. But it is organized and contains all your necessary information. Start by shaping it into sentences while casting out redundancies, eliminating unnecessary

EBSCOhost - printed on 3/19/2024 3:33 PM via AIKEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE. All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

words ("what is it that he wants" becomes "what does he want"). Tighten the sentences then spell check the whole reduction carefully, and punctuate it properly.

3.3.3 THIRD DRAFT

The third draft is a clean rewrite of the second, without any encumbrances or solecisms. If you work in an organization, this is the one you submit for superior approval, if demanded by protocol. If you are an independent, you might wish to try this on your editor, or a colleague.

Select graphics (sec. 5.3) to enhance the written text. For some magazine articles, colorful graphics make the piece more attractive, to entice readers. Be sure you caption and reference every graphic to its related place in the text.

3.3.4 FOURTH DRAFT

This draft is only required if you need one more polishing of the third draft, just to be sure. If you were reading it, not writing it, is it what you'd want to see?

3.4 TAPE RECORDER ALTERNATIVE

Some writers talk better than they write. Only experience will tell you which you are. You must be comfortable when setting out the first, free draft. If you choose to dictate, then tell it to the recorder as it is, as it comes to mind, then transcribe the recorded text onto a word processor. Deal with your double-spaced printout as a first draft following the route of sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, and 3.3.4. Either section 3.3 or 3.4 should yield you a good piece of work; go do it.

THERE IS NO MAGIC MEDICINE OF ONE DOSE.

EBSCOhost - printed on 3/19/2024 3:33 PM via AIKEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE. All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use